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December 2007

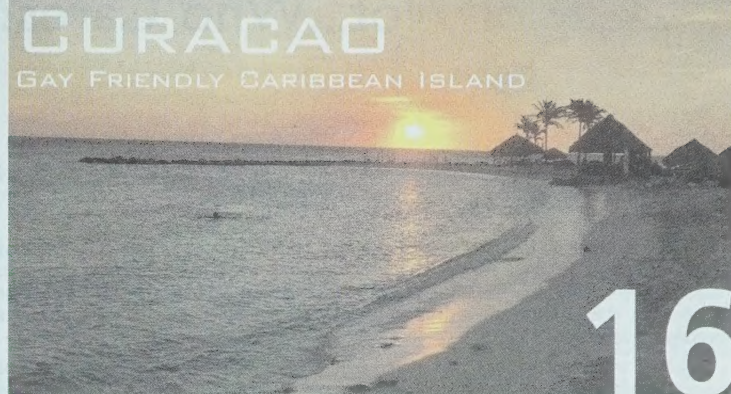


On the Cover

Season 3 COVERguy Winner:
Daniel Romoliwa

Photo by: Brian Lawrence

Cover Story Page 23



As winter approaches gay snowbirds often begin their planning for that much-needed winter break—somewhere sunny, warm and by the ocean. The Caribbean Islands have long been a favorite winter get-away destination for Canadians, but they are not traditionally renowned for their gay-friendliness.

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Families are blended. Services? Non-denominational. Custody is shared and Madge has everyone converting. So how on earth does one begin to compile a thorough and thoughtful—not to mention wholly PC—shopping list for the holiday season? Study your demos, know your audience and don't be afraid to revert to a little stereotyping. Shopping for those all-too-familiar personality traits can make the decisions fast—and the purchases easy.



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Suzanne Brockmann is the New York Times best-selling author of The Troubleshooter series of romance/suspense novels and the creator of a hugely popular gay FBI agent, Jules Cassidy.

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Gay or Not...Who Cares?

By John Coulbourn

I've been spending a lot of time of late trying to figure out just when it was we passed through the looking glass into the strange and topsy-turvy world we seem to be inhabiting.

I suspect it might have happened the day Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling outed dear old headmaster Albus Dumbledore, erstwhile and utterly fictitious head of the school in which the young wizard Potter and his friends have been steeped in the dark arts—although 'outing' might be a tad harsh, under the circumstances.

Asked if old Dumbledore had ever been in love, Rowling replied that he was gay actually and had in fact once loved an evil wizard (something with which, it seems to me, most gay men of a certain age can identify.)

Now, in a normal world, where media types mean it when they say, as they inevitably do, after every major coming out party, that sexual orientation should be no big deal, Rowling's comments would probably not have raised too many eyebrows, in view of the fact that the individual she was outing was (a) older than dirt, (b) recently deceased and (c) completely and utterly fictitious.

But this is not a normal world, and judging from the response heard 'round the world' one would have thought that Margaret Mitchell had come back to life to announce that not only had Rhett Butler dumped Scarlett O'Hara on her fat Irish ass, he'd then run off with Oscar Wilde, and the two of them are now living in a condo in New York where they are doing Salome's dance of the seven veils wearing nothing but the living room drapes and otherwise having a gay old time.

Not only did the right wing and the media go off the deep end in the wake of Rowling's announcement, so did a few members of the gay community who, it seems to me, have heretofore been so busy trying to establish that Potter himself was gay that they had completely overlooked the possibility that old Dumbledore was a friend of Dorothy's too.

In a world where a lot of real gay men have grown old and died without ever acknowledging or revealing their sexuality, there are still some few gay activists capable of working their knickers into a twist because Rowling allowed her art

to imitate life and failed to announce Dumbledore's sexuality before (a) he died and (b) the story's over.

If nothing else, it seems that the gay community has finally caught up with the straights, all of whom assume that unless a person or character is expressly labeled as black or gay, he must automatically be white and straight.

From there, we leaped into *Breakfast With Scott*, the Canadian movie about two gay men who find themselves raising a gay child—a movie that was news long before it hit theatres, not because of its subject matter, but rather because of its affiliations.

Seems one of the two dads in the movie is a professional hockey player and the Toronto Maple Leafs had unexpectedly granted permission for a (gasp) gay-themed movie to use their logo.

It's news, I guess, but from the fuss and feathers this one generated, one would have thought that, at the very least, the NHL Players' Association had extended full benefits to same sex partners at the very least. Kind of leaves one wishing that the gay community could control the use of our images when it comes to sappy movies.

Finally comes the piece de resistance, however, in word that Marc Ouellet, currently Archbishop of Quebec and Primate of Canada in the Roman Catholic Church, has issued a letter of apology for his church's treatment, pre-1960, of various groups, including amongst others, Jews, women and gays.

And while we applaud Ouellet being sorry 'bout all that, we would like to point out, without being churlish, that, outside the church, at least, it is usually much easier to forgive someone who is not only truly sorry, but who vows also to try to do better in the future.

Still, whether you're dealing with the sex life of a fictitious old head master or an equally fictitious hockey player, in the real world it's not the apology that counts, but the thought behind it, and if you're thinking you're still going to be able to get away with the same kind of behaviour for which you're apologizing, then you're frankly mad as a hatter.

Happy Holidays to one and all! ▼

John Coulbourn is a native Albertan who lived for many years in Calgary. He now makes his home in Toronto, where he covers performing arts for the Toronto Sun.

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By Roy Heale

Once again the year has passed all too quickly and now it's time for the festive holiday season and another New Year's celebration. As *Outlooks* celebrated its tenth anniversary in March this past year, we were reminded about how much has changed in Canada's GLBT community during the past decade—and now we can only look forward to how much the next decade will bring changes to our community.

This year I have traveled to Europe, the United States, the Caribbean and South America, which helps me to appreciate how much we as Canadians enjoy in terms of equality for our gay community. Much that we now take for granted is still a legal battle for change in many other countries and the old Red Rose Tea slogan "only in Canada...pity!" has become a phrase which is uttered worldwide. There might still be a long road ahead of us but we have journeyed far in the struggle for recognition and our freedom of choice. I'm always proud to be a gay Canadian as I enjoy my travels.

A FOND FAREWELL!

As 2007 draws to a close, we have to say a fond farewell to Cap Peters who is leaving *Outlooks* for a new career opportunity. Cap has been with us for just over four years and has been instrumental in making sure every issue hit the streets on time. From his sales efforts, to graphics design, Out & About photos for Calgary, to daily administration and more, his efforts on our behalf have been a major contribution. We will miss him, but wish him well in his new endeavors.

THE RESULTS ARE IN

Once again, we would like to thank the hundreds of readers who took the time to participate in our eleventh annual Readers' Survey. The information we learn about you, our valued readers, is important in our future editorial direction and for our advertisers to support us. This year we found that half of you are under age twenty-five and almost all the remainder are aged between twenty-six and fifty-five. This is a significant increase in our younger readers and is largely due to our growing online readership. Your top five favorite features—in random sequence—are Out & About community coverage, Opinion columns, Don't You Wish models, Travel stories and In The News items.

Only seven percent of you read daily newspapers and your other favorite GLBT magazine is the *Advocate*. When it comes to a vacation the most popular city in Canada is Montréal and if you're leaving the country then Mexico—and most often Puerto Vallarta—is your top choice. The winner of our prize package and \$100 cash is Richard H. from Calgary. Hopefully in 2008 you will notice some changes in *Outlooks* which will reflect your comments and suggestions. Thanks once again for your input.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

So, as another year draws to a close we would like to thank everyone involved in producing each issue of *Outlooks*, thanks to all of our advertisers who made it financially possible for us to publish for another year and thanks to you our valued readers who make it all worthwhile.

We wish you all Happy Holidays and a wonderful 2008!



OUTLOOKS

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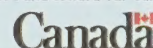


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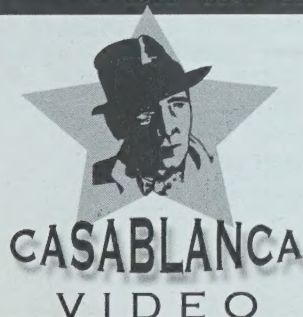
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Categorizing Christmas:

Gift Ideas for Everyone on the list

By Josh Murray

Families are blended. Services? Non-denominational. Custody is shared and Marge has everyone converting. So how on earth does one begin to compile a thorough and thoughtful—not to mention wholly PC—shopping list for the holiday season? Study your demos, know your audience and don't be afraid to revert to a little stereotyping. Shopping for those all-too-familiar personality traits can make the decisions fast—and the purchases easy.

The Style Guru

A glam girl's a cinch to buy for. A glam guy is a bit touchy. Save David Beckham, there are few role models and, with only a handful of respectable fashion magazines catering to the style-conscious man, informed recommendations are few and far between. **Style.com** thankfully got it right this fall when they chose a unique pair of cashmere jeans as a men's must. Cashmere...jeans. An odd coupling to be sure—but a luxurious one. French fashion house APC's 10% cashmere, 90% cotton version features a straight leg and the five-pocket trademark look of the denim mainstay. The pricey piece (approx. \$400) is available at retail locations in six major cities in Canada, including Vancouver, Toronto, and Edmonton.

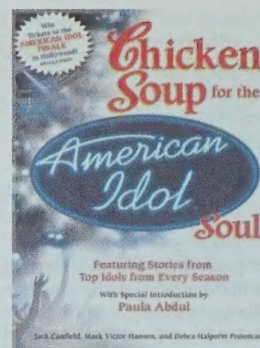
Tiffany and Co. has just slightly more reasonable options this season. The famed jewelers opened their second stand-alone Canadian store—in Vancouver—two weeks shy of Christmas in 2006, when most major purchasing decisions had already been settled. Take a little time this year to explore the 4,700 square foot west coast outfit and, in particular, their Metropolis line of sterling silver men's accessories. The clean, classic buckle (\$300) can prove a distinguished addition to any closet.

The Diva Devotee

If your list is topped off by a demanding diva, your choices this season are nearly endless. The Fleas Knees Tees, a homegrown line of dog-themed garments, sells ridiculously witty t-shirts inspired by the precious pets so familiar to Toronto's Yorkville and Vancouver's Yaletown neighbourhoods. Unlike other canine couture, these t-shirts—already sported by celebrities like Tori Spelling—are intended for human guardians, and not four-legged friends. Snappy slogans like “Mom of a Bitch” and “Fairy Dogmother” are emblazoned on 100% pima cotton tees in white or black. They retail for \$60 with a hefty portion of proceeds going directly to no-kill animal rescue foundations.

Perhaps your pretentious pretty is more inclined to soar through the skies than walk the local dog run. If a springtime jaunt to Sin City sounds like something you'd wrap with a bow this year, Bette Midler begins her stint at Caesar's Palace on February 20—replacing long-time resident Céline Dion. The Canadian chanteuse is off on another world tour and her replacement, iconic stage, screen and recording star Midler, is the perfect combination of Grammy-winning sophisticate and down-home sass. Tickets are available via Ticketmaster.

If you need your fill of divas closer to home, stuff stockings with CDs from any number of impressive female vocalists dropping new discs shortly before the holidays. Grammy winners Alicia Keys, Mary J. Blige and Aretha Franklin all deliver R&B collections while Céline Dion and Kylie Minogue provide the pop.



The Bratty Niece

There's nothing quite like tweens to mess with all of your shopping know-how. They are too old for a bear named Winnie but too young for a woman named Winehouse. The happy medium in 2007 is a combination of two of America's biggest exports in recent years. The unwaveringly inspiring Chicken Soup for the Soul literary series adds another tome to its impressive roster with the release of an American Idol-themed collection. *Chicken Soup for the American Idol Soul* (approx. \$15.00) brings fans of the mammoth TV hit tales from way behind-the-scenes. Performers and judges alike share their very personal stories of tribulation and triumph, in a manner that both comforts and uplifts. The 288-page book is available at Chapters-Indigo stores and online at amazon.ca.

Words alone won't suffice? Win over the younger set with tickets to either of the Spice Girls' Toronto shows in February. The British powergroup returns—with precariously high platform heels and unquestionably lip-synched vocals—for two sold-out shows in February. Tickets are available, for the right price, at ebay.ca.

The Chic Geek

If any name on your list makes you feel instantly inferior in the technology department, put up a good fight with a geeky gift this season.

iPod continues to roll out flashier, more functional versions each year. The new iPod Touch is the most recent addition to the family. The sleek touch-screen face makes the device even easier to use and, with a 3.5" display, viewing video content is particularly impressive. Both 8GB and 16GB versions are currently available and start at \$329.

At half that price, the newest iPod Nano (\$159.99) boasts a 2" wide screen and video capabilities that the previous versions of the diminutive device didn't. Even with the smaller size and lower price, the 4GB storage capability ensures up to 1900 minutes of music.

When the good boys and girls on your list possess book smarts but lack street savvy, perhaps the TomTom Portable GPS Navigation System (from \$249.99) is in store. The new third edition of the plug-and-go directional device will help guide you along any route you may choose in Canada or the United States. The 3.5" display screen provides a clear view of the selected path and allows you to easily locate millions of points of interest along the way, from restaurants to gas stations.

The Constant Shut-In

Perhaps the hardest person to buy for is the one that does...well...nothing. There's one in every friendship circle. They cancel at the last minute and ditch previously cemented plans—or never commit in the first place. These lonely souls mustn't be overlooked. A gift for their entertainment at home—alone—may be the best bet.

Among the season's biggest book releases is Rosie O'Donnell's recent *Celebrity Detox* (\$14.00). The open, honest memoir details her rocky road to stardom, her battle with depression and, yes, even her turbulent time on ABC's *The View*. Equally salacious—and at times sadly touching—is Eric Clapton's life story in *Clapton: The Biography* (\$17.00). The guitar hero shares his thoughts on a legendary career, his son's tragic death, the “Clapton is God” label and even that little wife-stealing episode that most certainly put his friendship with George Harrison to the test.

Finally, the complete series of NBC's comedy hit *Seinfeld* arrived on DVD in November. From Kramer's battle with “These pretzels are making me thirsty” to Teri Hatcher's memorable “They're real—and they're spectacular” quip, the comic gold of the '90s-era hit is as refreshing today as it was the day it debuted. ▼

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Josh Murray is a freelance writer. His own daily blog, ohmyjosh.ca, focuses on celebrity and news items—with a Canadian slant.

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This event is in support of Cardel's Night Under the Stars, which makes dreams come true for troubled youth.

Many Avenue businesses, including **Appeal and Rubaiyat**, have extended their hours for the holiday shopping season. Ample parking is available on 17th Avenue.

Winter Windowland 2007

For even more holiday fun and a chance to win a Christmas shopping spree on the Avenue, visit uptown17.ca and vote for your favorite decorated business.

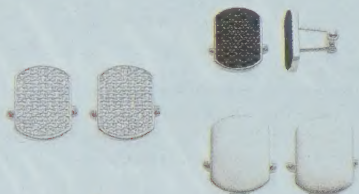
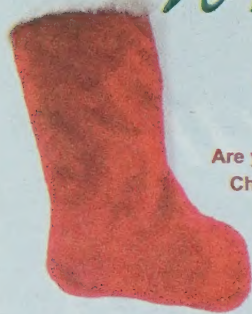


CARDEL
HOMES



What's in your Stocking this year?

Are you looking for some great stocking stuffer suggestions for this Christmas season? Here are a few ideas that any gay man would love to wake up to!



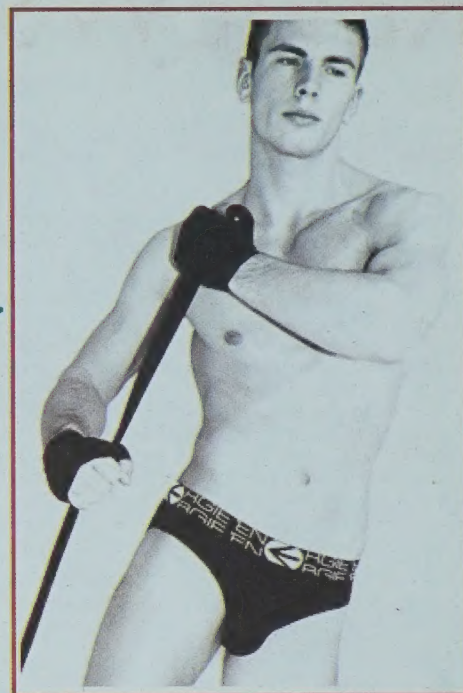
Thomas Sabo Bracelets/Cufflinks

The clasps of the cufflinks are made from solid sterling silver and come with **Thomas Sabo** branding. The panels are covered with white or black zirconia pave stones. The bracelets are made from top-quality calfskin with a mock-croc appearance. They are additionally padded and lined with leather. A lot of manual labour goes into their finish, which increases the toughness of the leather and gives it patina with time, which further emphasizes the genuine look.

To view Thomas Sabo's entire line visit thomassabo.com or call 1-800-361-4611

Energie Underwear > Jupiter Slip Brief

This is a stylin' new men's bikini brief from Italian designer **Energie** with a pouch front, high-cut legs, full seat back and Energie logo waistband in light 4-way stretch cotton. To see the full line of **Energie** visit topdrawers.com.



What's Christmas without Chocolates!

By Bernard Callebaut

Bernard creates his baking ingredients from the same exquisite chocolate he uses to craft his award-winning delicacies. Visit bernardcallebaut.com.



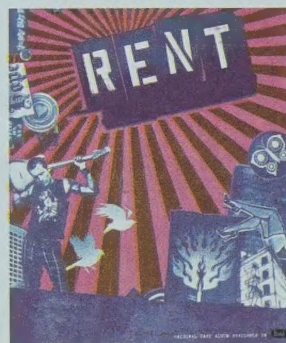
COOLdog™

A Guide to Safe Off Leash Fun

By Sherri Olsen

Does your dog ignore you when you call them? Do you feel stressed out at the thought of letting your dog off leash? Not sure where to begin with training? **COOLdog** is the urban pet owners' survival guide to the off leash park. **COOLdog** is packed full of useful training tips for dogs of all ages that will make walks safer and more enjoyable. The four-step training method teaches your dog to be **COOL**: *Controlled behaviour, Off leash, Out havin' fun, Lovin' my owner*. All training methods are cruelty-free and don't rely on relentless treat giving.

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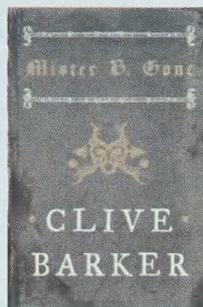
REVIEWS

By Dale Smith

Books

Mister B. Gone

The gay master of macabre and the supernatural, Clive Barker, returns to the classic horror tale with *Mister B. Gone*, a memoir allegedly penned in the year 1438 by a medieval devil. From the warning tones of the first line—"Burn this book"—this richly crafted tale of the demon Jakabok Botch recounts how he came to be in the World Above and ultimately embedded within the words of the book itself. The reading experience is a visceral treat while Barker's craft tempts and seduces in much the way the demon at the centre of the story does. Aside from being a great read, *Mister B. Gone* is also a beautiful tome in its own right—the hardcover protecting discoloured pages that appear to be aged from their centuries of existence, hiding some of the more modern contrivances of publishing. Certainly a must-have for any fan of the genre.



The Frozen Thames



In its history, England's River Thames has frozen solid forty times. Drawing upon this historical fact, queer Canadian author Helen Humphries brings us forty vignettes based on events that actually took place during each of those forty frozen winters between the years 1142 and 1895. From stories like Queen Matilda trying to escape her besieged castle

during a snowstorm, lovers meeting during the plague years, or Queen Bess discovering the privacy afforded by the frozen river, Humphrey's beautiful prose brings each story to life in those glimpses of history. More than just the words on the page, this beautifully designed book is also illustrated throughout with full-colour period art from those same years, giving us a richer look at those rare times in history when the extraordinary happened.

DVD

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Long Way Home



Have you or someone you know been longing to return to the days of kick-ass vampire slayers, making pithy remarks about staking the things that go bump in the night? Well, fear not—Buffy creator Joss Whedon has decided to bring back his most glorious creation in a new medium free of the restraints of a small-screen budget—namely, comic books. Dubbed "Season Eight", Whedon has reassembled his team of writers and is partnering with some of the biggest names in the industry in order to keep the story going. *The Long Way Home* collects the first five issues, comprising the first story arc of the new "season" in a trade paperback edition. We are not only given the opportunity to catch up with just what Buffy, Xander, Willow and company have been up to since the show went off the air, but it also introduces Twilight, a mysterious organisation that has declared war on the new Slayers, believing them to be a threat to the human race. Throw in a couple of old villains for good measure, and you get a fast-paced tale that reminds you just why Buffy ruled the airwaves, and is poised to dominate the comic book racks.

Music:

Darren Hayes

*This Delicate Thing We've Made

Once the front man of Savage Garden, Hayes brings us his third solo offering, but certainly his most ambitious to date. Newly out, in a civil partnership with his long-time boyfriend and now free from his major label contract, Hayes went all out in his first independent effort—a double album that is all at once fun, deep, and can move you to dance or give pause. While electronica is the vehicle by which Hayes takes you on the journey, it is merely one tool in all the many layers by which Hayes has crafted his oeuvre. The sounds are diverse, from pop rock (the lead single *On The Verge of Something Wonderful*), forlorn ballads (*I Just Want You To Love Me*), white funk (*Me Myself and (I)*), to eighties power pop (Casey), with influences ranging from Prince, to Kate Bush and Kylie. The masterpiece at the centre of it all is a multi-layered pop symphony called *How To Build A Time Machine*—and it will blow your mind. Hayes has proven his musical mastery, and if this is only a taste of the kind of creativity he has in store now that he's an independent artist, we should all keep an eye on just what he will do next. **This Delicate Thing We've Made* is also available in a special edition black velvet package.



Spice Girls Greatest Hits (Virgin)

Admit it—you were giddy with anticipation when the Spice Girls announced their reunion, and at very long last, their greatest hits package is being released in time for Christmas this year. *Greatest Hits* includes their twelve hit singles, plus *Move Over*, which was the song created for the Pepsi "Generation Next" ad campaign, and two new tracks—*Headlines* (Friendship Never Ends) and *Voodoo*. And to ensure that you get what you want—what you really, really want—*Greatest Hits* comes in three editions: the fifteen-track album on its own (with a white cover), a CD/DVD pack which also includes the girls' classic videos (with a black cover), and a special Gift Box edition which includes the CD, the DVD, plus a Karaoke CD, remix disc, friendship bracelet and five picture postcards. For that little bit of spice in your life.

Dale Smith is a freelance writer in Ottawa. He is also a regular contributor to *Capital Xtra* and *Ottawa Xpress*, and an occasional contributor to the *Hill Times*.

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A LIFE IN TWO WORLDS:

Mirtha Rivera's Story

By Rick Pollard

Most people who fight for social change understand that there are really two worlds—the world we dare to imagine, and the world others tell us to endure.

Mirtha Rivera has always lived in two worlds.

Growing up in Chile, she wasn't "white enough" for her mother's family, who were descended from Spanish-speaking Europeans. But she was "too white" for her father's family, who were descended from the indigenous Mapuche people.

Her commitment to social change led to her being arrested and imprisoned under a dictator's regime. But she fled her home and became a political refugee to protect her family.

She was a married mother of two. But, after seventeen years of marriage, she came to terms with her same sex preferences and today lives openly as a lesbian.

Even today, Rivera lives in two worlds. She has held a number of key positions in Regina's queer community, but admits that she is often at odds with other gay and lesbian activists.

EARLY YEARS

Rivera was born in 1948 in Santiago, Chile—the only child of a seamstress and a machinist employed in a munitions factory.

Her mother's family had once been people of considerable means. They were among the first to have electricity in Santiago. There were nannies for each of the children. Then her grandfather had an extramarital affair that cost the family its fortune under circumstances that Rivera says were never really explained.

The family never really accepted its new station in life. "They continued to act as though they were rich," Rivera recalls. And, while some family members accepted her dual heritage, others were not so generous. It was her first experience with prejudice.

Rivera was closer to her "Indian grandmother," who had been born the illegitimate child of a wealthy man and, like her granddaughter, was accustomed to being at odds with those around her. Rivera even learned to speak Mapuche, but regretfully admits that she retains none of her grandmother's native tongue today.

She knew from age five that she was attracted to other women. "I knew I was not like my cousins or like the other girls at school who were boy-crazy. But, at that time, it was impossible to come out," she recalls. "It was not written anywhere, but it was really dangerous. You ran the risk of getting beat up, or killed, or put in prison because you were a pervert."

Rivera remembers a male friend who was quite effeminate and sometimes dressed up as a girl. He was beaten up regularly by other boys in the neighbourhood, and parents would tell their children not to talk to "that faggot."

"For me, as a girl, it was easier. In Chile, you see women holding hands and hugging and walking arm in arm. Still, I was afraid. I would hold hands with my cousin, but not with my best friend." Rivera had a crush on her best friend and was afraid to show her affection out of fear someone would guess the truth.

LIFE AS A REVOLUTIONARY AND REFUGEE

Her upbringing caused Rivera to question the way the world worked, and led her inevitably to social activism, the Communist Party, Chilean folk culture and her husband Jose Sepulveda.

When she met Sepulveda, she was a singer and his family was a folk music group from the countryside. "Before Allende was elected, things were changing," says Rivera. "And there was a popular movement in the arts to get all of us young people back to our roots."

The couple married in 1971. Their first son was born in 1972.

In 1970, Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile on a platform of land reform and copper-mine nationalization. He was a Marxist, and a disapproving United States imposed economic sanctions on the new government.

On September 11, 1973, Allende was deposed in a military coup that many people believe was backed by the CIA. He committed suicide. For the next seventeen years, General Augusto Pinochet ruled Chile with an iron fist. He soon became notorious for the manner in which he dealt with potential threats to his government.

In the months after the coup, Rivera began to ask questions about some of the people who were going missing under Pinochet's regime. In March 1974, she was approached by a Canadian nun working in a local community clinic.

"She said that people were following me, that she had seen them watching me," Rivera recalls. "She said she knew people, and she could help me get out if I wanted. But I said no—you don't need to do that."

A month later, Rivera was arrested and imprisoned.

She was accused of possession of weapons and distribution of political propaganda, although no one ever explained the specific allegations that prompted those charges. While she was imprisoned, the police raided her home but didn't find any weapons. Rivera owned books that would have caused her family a lot of problems, but her father hid them before the police came.

She was detained in a room so cramped that the women had to take turns sleeping and eating. From time to time, one of her fellow prisoners left the room and never came back. Rivera assumes that most of the women were released, but the implication at that time was far more sinister. "They told us to be happy about it because it meant more room for the rest of us," she recalls. "They were trying to scare us into confessing things we were not doing."

One day, Rivera's captors blindfolded the remaining women, drove to a remote area, opened the door and told them to run. Shots were fired. To this day, Rivera doesn't know if anyone was shot or killed that day.

"I'm not a really good runner so I fell down the hill. I don't remember anything except falling down," she says. "I passed out, and when I woke up, there was this family with me."

Rivera and her hosts were afraid to exchange names in case it was a trap. Instead, she gave them the name of her best friend, who contacted Rivera's father.

Rivera was reunited with her family, but realized that staying in Chile was now impossible. With the help of the Canadian nun who had warned her of impending danger months earlier, the family escaped to Canada.

COMING OUT

In the years that followed, Rivera and Sepulveda had another son and became fixtures in Regina's Chilean community. They started a Chilean folk music group and helped to found the Chilean Association of Regina. But, after seventeen years of marriage, Rivera realized she could no longer deny her sexual orientation.

She came out as a lesbian, first to her husband and then to her oldest son. She says that her son accepted her, but he was afraid. "He had heard that lesbians hated men and he thought that I would hate him."

Eventually, Rivera became involved in a long-term same-sex relationship. That relationship has now lasted as long as Rivera's marriage and the couple are now grandparents.

The queer community provided Rivera with another outlet for her activist personality. She served as President of the Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR). She marched in Regina's first Gay Pride Parade wearing a mask. She is also a long-time member of the Prairie Pride Chorus, Regina's queer choral ensemble.

Her work is motivated by a simple philosophy. "I want to create a safe space for young people, and for people who come out later in life. When we come out, we're vulnerable. We need people who can support us, who have been there and done that."

Rivera admits that she doesn't get along with everyone in Regina's queer community, but contends there are side benefits to those clashes. "Most of my friends in the community are people with whom I had arguments about things that were important. You get to know people that way, as opposed to people who sit back and don't say anything."

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Rivera believes that too many people fail to take responsibility for the world around them. "People misunderstand what it means to be political," she declares. "Even by not participating, you're making a political statement."

Clearly, her life experiences have taught Rivera some hard lessons about taking social progress for granted. Even today, she lives in two worlds—the more tolerant world she helped to build and the less tolerant world that could result from people's apathy.

"If I learned anything from where I came from, it's that it can all go away," she warns. "We thought we had it all. And in just a few short hours, we lost everything." ▼

Rick Pollard is a long-time community activist and one of the co-hosts of "Out On the Air", a GLBT program that airs Wednesdays on CJTR community radio in Regina.



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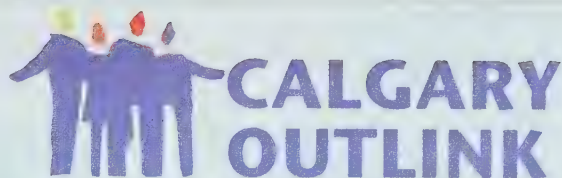
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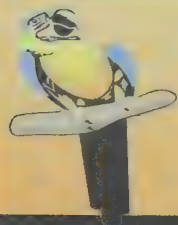
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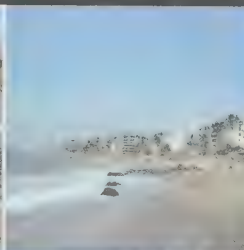
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Gio's Cares: From Ray (and many others) With Love

By Peter Carlyle-Gordge

Back in the grim old days when HIV infections and deaths from AIDS were seriously terrifying the GLBT community, one man living with the disease decided something had to be done to make lives that seemed hopelessly doomed a little brighter.

That man was the late Ray Lewis, who himself had AIDS.

Aware that many people with the disease were shunned by family and former friends, Lewis decided something had to be done to bring a little cheer into constricted lives. The upshot was Gio's Cares, a non-profit, charitable organization that prepares gift packages to brighten up Christmas and remind people having a frightening, lonely time that someone still cares.

Drugs have improved, longevity has vastly increased and attitudes have slowly become kinder since Lewis got his bright idea back in 1992.

Back then he bought little treats and friend Aimee Olivier, now also deceased, baked cookies and treats to go in the gift packs along with the small gifts Lewis supplied. Olivier also put on the occasional fundraising drag show when he appeared as Norah.

Since that time, Gio's Cares has thrived. For years it was run by retired civil servant Frank Price, who acted as president, raised funds and even got a charitable tax number for the group—something that made giving much easier, since tax receipts are always useful for offsetting income tax. The organization has also been kept alive by the work of John Cumming, who also acted as president and helped with much of the organizing.

At one point gift packs were being handed out four times a year, but now it's down to three times: Christmas, Easter and around Pride Day.

Gio's Cares relies on a small group of volunteers to do the shopping and pack the gift baskets. Today they usually provide sixty to seventy-five at each distribution. Each is worth roughly \$35 and they need about \$7,000 a year to keep the tradition alive. Their motto is 'caring through sharing'.

Gio's Cares does not decide who gets the gift packs. That's left to staff at Winnipeg's Nine Circles Community Health Centre as well as the Health Sciences Centre—the two main providers of HIV services. To be eligible the recipient must be HIV positive and in clear need of help due to physical or psychological criteria. The aim is to cheer them up and let them know they are not forgotten.

Today the organization has a new, energetic president—Kelly Lay, a carpenter. Aged forty-four, he is single and has brought a lot of new energy (and good volunteers) to keep the organization running. Lay spends all his spare time helping good causes and he is also very practical. He loves helping others.

Shopping for gift items is a major chore, so he's simplified it. Almost all of it is done at Dollarama, where he's amazed what you can buy for a few bucks. On his first outing he ended up with several dozen shopping carts loaded to the gills.

"Now I have a good relationship with the manager and I just fill up a basket with about twenty-five different items," he says. "The store does the shopping for me and just puts together sixty or seventy of each item I've chosen, so it saves a lot of time."

Packing the gifts is a major work that requires production lines and he has about ten volunteers he can rely on. One year, to simplify things and eliminate much of the shopping, they decided to give out gift cards, but never again.

"Some of the recipients were just selling the gift cards as soon as they got them," says Lay. "It's very sad but some of them have addictions and need money, so gift cards just didn't work."

He's been pressuring the distribution agencies to ensure they keep adding new names to the recipient list, so that the same regulars don't always get everything. And Gio's Cares also did a feedback form for clients, which produced some warm responses, telling them the gifts were beautiful and they were grateful that someone cared so much.

Lay has also been deeply touched by some of the anecdotes he's heard. "One man told me his lover was in hospital dying of AIDS and he got a gift pack which had a couple of plush toy bears in it. He hung onto those bears every day and when he died he asked that they be buried with him."

Keeping these gift packs going three times a year costs at least \$7,000 and Lay is constantly urging financial donations. Any gift over \$10 gets a tax receipt. "We have some generous benefactors and the Winnipeg Foundation recently gave us a \$4,000 donation which will really help," he says. "The good news is that we can also go back to them next year for more. All they require is that we provide financial statements on how we spend the money."

Included in the gift packs are many personal care products such as soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo and so on. They have also included plush toys, toques, scarves, mitts and a variety of novelty items. "We still include some home-made baking treats to add that personal touch," says Lay. "We also include a five dollar Tim Horton's gift card so they can have coffee with a friend. Horton's offered us a free cookie for every certificate we bought so that worked fine."

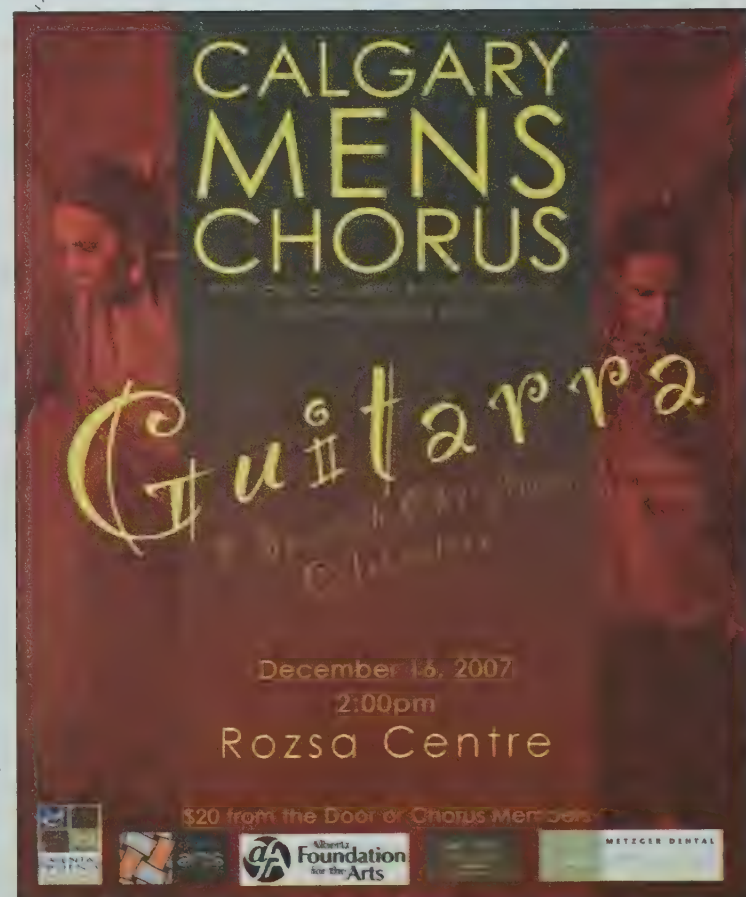
Gifts are bought a month before Christmas, Easter or Pride Week and they're delivered for distribution about two weeks later.

When not busy with Gio's Cares, Lay also raises funds and buys food for an HIV Food Bank. He and other volunteers also promote safe sex by assembling about a thousand safe sex kits every month for distribution at gay baths, clinics and bars.

Anyone who wishes to support Gio's Cares can write to them at: Gio's Cares, P.O. Box 1983, Station Main, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3R3. All members of the Oscar Wilde Memorial Society, which runs Gio's Club and Bar are automatically members of its offshoot, Gio's Cares. Tax receipts are issued on request for amounts over ten dollars. ▼

Peter Carlyle-Gordge is a former Manitoba correspondent for Maclean's and The Financial Post. He has written for most major magazines and newspapers in Canada as well as broadcasting on the national and international networks of CBC Radio. As honorary press secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba in the 1980s, Peter was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for services to Canada in 2003.

Photo by Brent Young



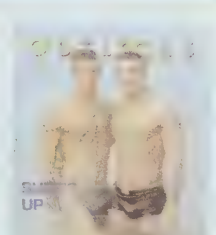
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Plugging Into Addiction

By David King

When Montréal actor and educator André-Léonard Nantel found out about the suicide of a close friend in 2000, the shock and aftershock changed his life forever.

"He was someone who was proud and solid," says Nantel. "This was not someone you would have expected to commit suicide, and I just didn't believe it. All my life I have always been a bit of a humanitarian, but I think his death illuminated things to a point where I really needed to do more about addiction."

Since 2000, the rise in crystal meth use has guided Nantel towards a focus on addiction itself. Forming the company Les Productions Next Star, Nantel turned shock into voltage with a string of fundraising benefits and cabarets to raise funds for addiction awareness. It's a mission he's increasingly channeled through his company, and turning his eye towards educational DVDs these days, he's begun powering up material for a full television documentary series on addiction he calls *Danger 220 Volt D.C.*

As merely one drug in a world of addiction, bringing meth into focus is not unusual in Montréal, as made evident recently by nightlife company Radical 5, whose campy short *Leatherella Against The Evil Crystal Queen* by artistic director Jean-Pierre Pérusse, quickly offered itself to the YouTube gods to maintain awareness after its initial club screening.

"I think crystal meth is getting crushed in the community," says Nantel, "but there is so much to be done and such a mixture of drugs being consumed these days".

Beginning with high schoolers, Next Star's educational DVDs have already been

given a warm reception by educators battling drugs in schools, with plans for materials aimed at adults and expansion to English-language markets. As he explores addictions including sex, drugs, gambling, and alcohol, Nantel readily admits drugs, have been a central focus for him lately in raising awareness. And while Montreal's gay village is certainly not the only victim of party drugs like meth, it is a geographic hotbed of clubs and mixed crowds of all ages and orientations. As a result, Nantel's been most active in event coordination in the Village, including a "Sexy" Hallowe'en cabaret at Club Parking where he recently collected three-hours of footage while raising funds and awareness alongside local drag celeb Mado Lamotte.

"I've organized a lot of events," Nantel notes, "it's in my nature, and I think I wear that hat well. These days, however, it's become more important to solidify my experience and to create that visibility at producers and distributors like the National Film Board, as well as securing government funding."

An actor now peering his eye into a camera lens, Nantel has been keeping the cam steady on the gritty reality of his subjects, capturing not only witness testimonials to addiction but the affects addicts have on the loved ones around them. From what he confirms, there's a huge generation gap in attitudes and behaviours.

"I'm aiming for real life in developing this series," describes Nantel, "and from what I see the new generation has their eyes wide open more than ever before or more closed than ever before. There's such a mix of subjects and I try to crossover those lines as much as I can."

Judging from Next Star's exploration of addiction in general, Nantel has more than enough subject matter to warrant a full series, and he continues to fundraise without getting too caught up in one-night events that drain lots of energy for little profit. To Nantel, Next Star's goals are simply about unveiling conscience, and finding a freedom and balance amidst a harsher reality that addiction is all around us. If he injects that reality at the appropriate large dose, we may soon find the smaller dose we need.

For more information or an information package on Next Star Productions, contact andrenantel@videotron.ca.

David King is a freelancer in arts, culture and travel, and the Artistic Director of Montreal's OUT Productions (out.ca)

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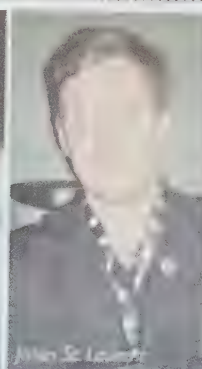
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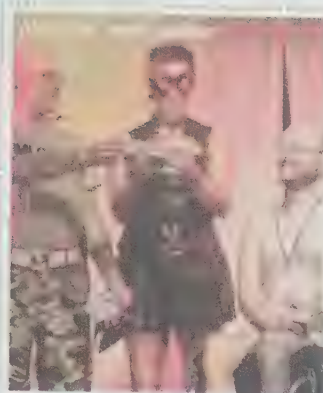


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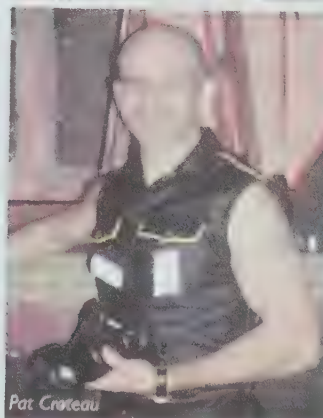
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Curaçao

Gay Friendly Caribbean Island

By Roy Hoole



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As winter approaches gay snowbirds often begin their planning for that much-needed winter break—somewhere sunny, warm and by the ocean. The Caribbean Islands have long been a favorite winter get-away destination for Canadians, but they are not traditionally renowned for their gay-friendliness. Just ask Rosie O'Donnell about the welcome she received in Nassau, Bahamas when her inaugural Family Cruise docked there in 2004 amidst a flurry of local anti-gay religious demonstrations. Or perhaps you've heard some of the stories about Jamaica and the homophobic behavior amongst some local residents. Well, now there's some good news as Curaçao proudly demonstrates their gay-friendly reception for GLBT tourists and welcomes you to their tropical island with some of the most beautiful white sandy beaches and luxury resorts in the Caribbean.

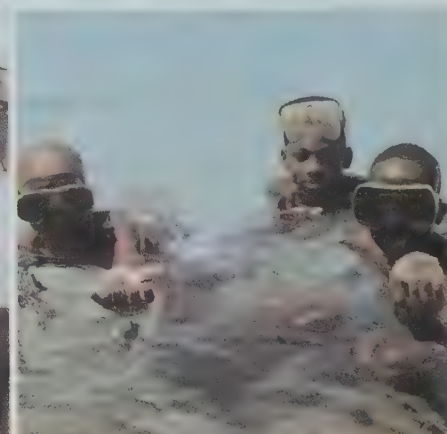
Located just a two and a half hour flight from Miami, Curaçao is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and is perfectly situated just outside of the hurricane belt. This Dutch influence may be partially responsible for the gay-friendly attitude of the local residents. On this tropical island you will find an eclectic mix of history and culture, which has served to create a Caribbean experience unlike any other. Also known for its eco-tourism and pristine diving conditions, Curaçao attracts the adventure traveler as well as those looking to unwind and enjoy its perfect climate. Visitors to the island will enjoy the thirty-plus white sandy beaches, eighteen-hole championship golf course, amazing dolphin interaction program, casinos, gourmet restaurants, European shops and much more.

Curaçao's rich history comes alive in the stunning architecture to be seen all across the island—especially in its capital city, Willemstad. Established in the mid-1600s, Willemstad's diverse buildings recall the quaint designs of Amsterdam, with exquisite seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch colonial buildings not to be found anywhere else outside of the Netherlands. Willemstad's traditional Dutch styles were modified to accommodate the island's dry and breezy climate, Caribbean accents such as verandas, porches, fretwork, and shutters were added. The pastel colour scheme introduced a bright, bold palette, which distinguishes this island from many others. In 1997, the UNESCO World Heritage Site committee selected the historic city center of Willemstad—one of just six Caribbean sites chosen—because of its "outstanding value and integrity, which illustrates the organic growth of a multicultural community over three centuries, and preserves to a high degree significant elements." Strolling around the town you can enjoy these sights along with many relaxing cafes, bars and restaurants.

Although there are no exclusively gay accommodations on the island there are many resorts that welcome the GLBT community with open arms. As a demonstration of their



Cave Entrance



commitment to embracing gay travelers, Hotel Kura Hulanda, Lodge Kura Hulanda, Avila Hotel, Hilton Curaçao, Floris Suite Hotel, Sunset Waters Beach Resort, Lions Dive Hotel, Papagayo Beach Resort, Habitat Dive Resort, Waterside Apartments along with Yellow Tour Info Center, Explore Curaçao and International Accommodations & Concierge Services all joined the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) to further their gay friendly statements with real support for the community.

The dedicated GLBT website gaycuracao.com lists the gay-friendly weekend hot spots, citing the gay bars being Limbo Bar (located at Keizershof in Otrobanda), Lyric's Café frequented by locals (located at the Waterfort Arches in Punda) and It's My Life (located near Yolanda snack at Groot Kwartier). Additional gay-friendly places are Mambo Beach, which is the place to be every Saturday night, while Tu Tu Tango is a Friday night hot spot. Wet & Wild is the Sunday night destination, Ay Caramba on Tuesday nights and Cinco on a Thursday night. This selection of gay and gay-friendly venues is probably the largest number to be found on any Caribbean Island and provides a wide range of choices for gay vacationers to enjoy the nightlife after a day in the hot sun or enjoying a wide variety of aqua sports.

Naturally, with such beautiful white sandy beaches, the clear blue ocean and the perfect temperatures—nearly always around eighty degrees Fahrenheit—water sports are one of the most popular vacation activities. Almost every resort and hotel with a beach will rent snorkeling and scuba diving equipment so that vacationers can enjoy the underwater coral reef—which begins within one hundred yards of most beaches. It is also possible to enjoy windsurfing, sea kayaking, jet skis, coral reef boat tours and much more.

At the Dolphin Academy, visitors get the opportunity to meet dolphins and swim, snorkel or even dive with these special sea animals in six different programs. These are very reasonably priced and conducted with expert supervision for the experience of a lifetime amidst these fascinating intelligent creatures of the sea.

If you are looking for activities away from the ocean then Curaçao affords a unique combination of other outdoor activities.

The Hato Caves, open seven days a week, were formed below the sea level millions of years ago. With the Ice Ages the water level dropped down and Curaçao was born. The Hato cave covers an area of 4900 square meters, and is the home to the beautiful limestone formations, romantic pools, waterfall and the famous Madonna statue. Also inside the Cave is a colony of seldom-seen long-nose fruit bats. Tours are on the hour starting at 10 AM to 4PM each day.

If you enjoy nature hiking along deserted paths then the Shete Boka Natural Park on the northeastern tip of the island offers a spectacular rugged coastline and numerous hiking trails. Huge waves thunderously pound the rocky coastline creating huge caverns and magnificent blowholes. You will also discover the breeding grounds for three species of turtles.

Yellow Tourism Solutions can take you on a Jeep Safari to explore the island's central desert, northern coastline and underground caves. Or you can plan a horseback ride, rent a bicycle or mountain bike or a motor scooter to venture out to explore on your own. The numerous seventeenth and eighteenth-century plantation houses are a fascinating part of the island's history and the Landhuis Groot Santa Martha built in 1696 has been magnificently restored and is well worth a visit.

One of the island's major historical attractions is the Museum Kurá Hulanda. It is an anthropological museum that focuses on the predominant cultures, ancestry and history of Curaçao. It offers a world-class chronicle of the Origin of Man, the African slave trade, West African Empires, Pre-Colombian gold, Mesopotamian relics and Antillean art. Set in the original dockland buildings from some of the historic sea-trading days of Curaçao's past this is a fascinating step back in time to the island's origins.

Local gay and lesbian residents create their own

version of Pride celebrations each year at the end of September called the Wet and Wild Weekend. This is a fun weekend full of parties, celebrations and festivities for the local GLBT crowd and visitors to the island. It includes parties in all the bars and clubs, a movie night on the beach, a midnight cruise and of course water sports at the popular Sunset Waters Beach Resort. This is a fun time when the gay community steps out and is highly visible around the island.

So, there's no longer a reason to fear homophobia on the island treasures of the Caribbean. Without a doubt this gay-friendly paradise is destined to become the newest gay choice for a Caribbean vacation get-away. From the ocean playground to the historic sites, the natural unspoiled countryside, the spectacular nightly sunsets, gourmet dining and fun nightlife, every day can be filled with different holiday activities for a perfect vacation in the sun. Perhaps Rosie O'Donnell should consider Curaçao as one of the ports of call on her next Family Cruise—there's a guaranteed friendly welcome awaiting her arrival!

Be sure to pack plenty of suntan lotion, as Curaçao is just a few degrees north of the equator and year-round the days are mostly hot and sunny. But that's perfect to enjoy the crystal clear blue waters of the Caribbean Ocean and forget about the cold, snowy winter days—just for a while! ▼

Photos by AJ from Court Jester Media



HELPFUL WEBSITES:

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- sunquest.ca
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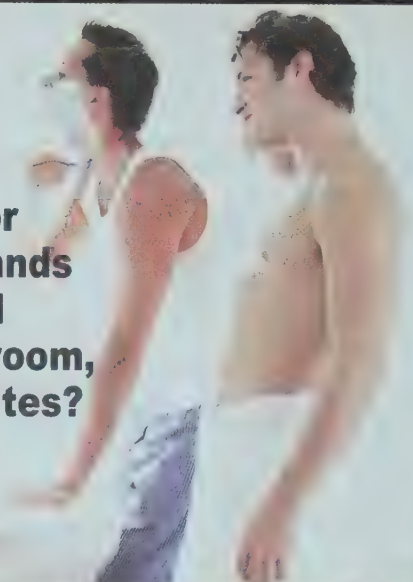


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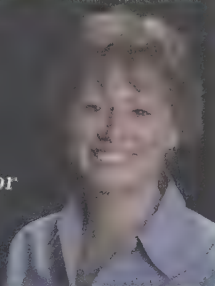


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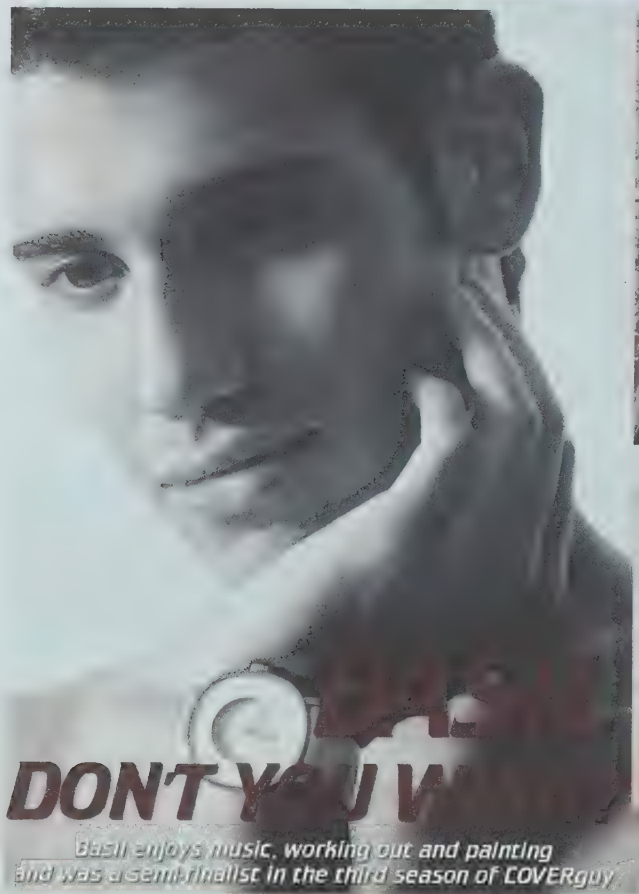
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DON'T YOU WANT

*Basil enjoys music, working out and painting
and was a semi-finalist in the third season of COVERguy*



Photos by Brian Lawrence

19

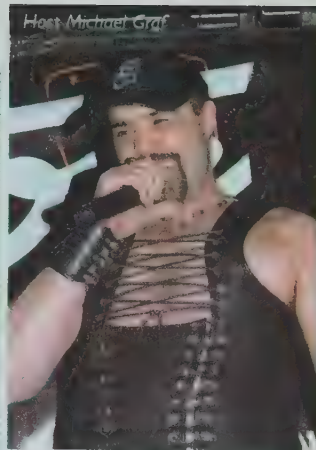
Pumpjack Boots and/or Balls

November 17 at Pumpjack

Doug, Mike, Josh, Gordon & Brent



Host Michael Graf



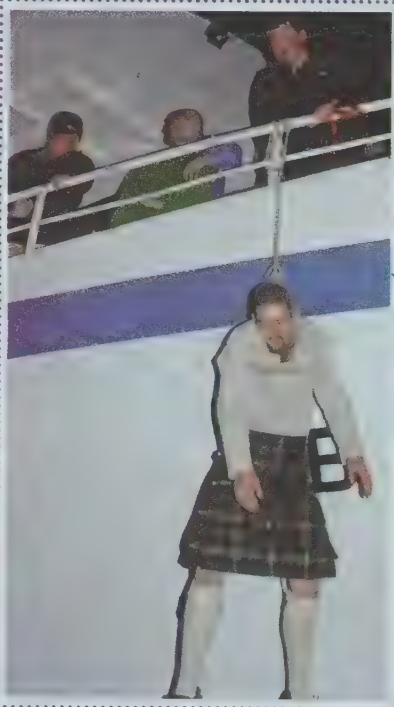
Boots on Brent

Planning an event in Vancouver? Contact Barry at 604.685.1377 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: Barry Piersdorff

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October 26 — a Cruise T Event



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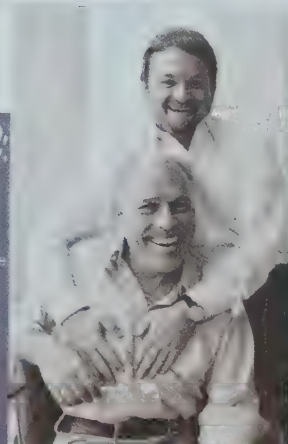


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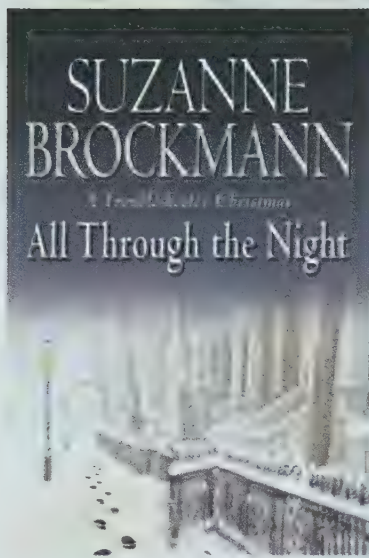
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PROUD MOTHER

By Ralph Higgins

Suzanne Brockmann is the New York Times best-selling author of *The Troubleshooter* series of romance/suspense novels and the creator of a hugely popular gay FBI agent, Jules Cassidy. She is also a warm, funny, passionate and compassionate woman whose latest book, *All Through The Night*, features the same sex wedding of Jules to his long time love, Robin. All proceeds from the book go to MassEquality. We spoke with Suzanne Brockmann about her work as a novelist, her commitment as a PFLAG mother and her activism for gay rights in her home state of Massachusetts.

Outlooks: When did you first become interested in issues affecting

the GLBT community?

SB: Years ago, I had a friend who tried, with subtext, to tell me he was gay. It wasn't until he moved all the way to England that he got up the nerve to write and tell me he'd joined the Gay Men's Chorus there. I realized right then, just how difficult it was for my friend simply to be himself. We were "friends". He knew me. And yet he was afraid to tell me—out of fear that I'd stop being his friend. And I had failed to notice all the clues because I simply wasn't thinking in an open-minded enough frame. My world got a whole lot bigger (and more interesting!) that day!

Which was probably why I was so perceptive when my son came along. He set my gaydar a'clacking when he was three!

Outlooks: How did the character of Jules arrive? Why a gay FBI agent?

SB: One of the things I noticed about the romance genre—back when I started writing, in the early 1990s—was that many books were set in an America that I didn't recognize, with a homogenous "Wonderbread white" cast of characters. So right from the start, I wanted to write books that were set in my America, in my incredibly diverse neighborhood, with its wonderful mix of Americans of all shapes, sizes, religions, races and orientations. Really, it was just a matter of finding the right time and place to introduce a gay character. Once Jules appeared as a character, my readers fell in love with him and clamored to see more.

Outlooks: I was impressed to see the romance between Jules and Robin treated with exactly the same respect as the straight romances. And they are very sexual, not at all chastely romantic!

SB: That was one of my goals in creating Jules and giving him a romantic subplot—to create a character in mainstream romance fiction who was truly gay, not just gay-ish. Frankly, the books I write are steamy. I happen to believe that sex is an enormously important part of a romantic relationship. I want that fire and spark—and I want it for my characters, too. No way was I going to write a romantic story arc for Jules without delivering some serious heat!

Outlooks: I was very affected by Robin and Jules' marriage. Do you feel the supportive reaction of Jules' fellow FBI agents and tough guy Troubleshooter friends is realistic or is it a reflection of your hopes?

SB: I love the idea that I'm helping to grow tolerance. You know, I rarely include weddings in my books. They're all basically the same. But in the case of *All Through The Night*, I chose to write about Robin and Jules's wedding for that very reason! A wedding is a wedding is a wedding, gay or straight.

I live in the enlightened state of Massachusetts. Yet I know from my travels that there are places in the United States where I would urge my son to het up, if he's out alone. (Which sucks, doesn't it? Nothing raises my PFLAG mom ire more than having to tell my son to hide who he is. But it's vital to me that he makes sure he's safe.)

Outlooks: How does your son feel about Jules?

SB: When I began Jules' romantic story arc with my book *Hot Target*, I sat down with Jason and we talked about the fact that this book was going to get some attention [for being] one of the first mainstream romances to feature a gay romantic subplot. I told Jace that I could approach the promotion for *Hot Target* as "New York Times Bestselling author Suz Brockmann," or as "New York Times Bestselling author and PFLAG mom, Suz Brockmann."

I pointed out that there was a big difference between being out, as he currently was, and being Out, as were celebrities like Ellen or people in the news such as Mary Cheney. He told me that, if he was out, then he was also willing to be Out.

As the book was getting ready to go to print, I let him read the dedication for *Hot Target*, which is really a letter of love, written to him. It's also a recipe for raising all children—gallons of love, understanding and huge amounts of support—and a celebration of this gift I was given in the form of my wonderful gay son.

Outlooks: It is a remarkable document and I defy anyone to read it and remain unmoved. (SuzanneBrockmann.com/htdedication.htm)

SB: When Jason read it, he cried, I cried, and he told me that if just one person's life was changed by reading that dedication, if one person's path was made even slightly easier, then we both would have done something incredibly special. It was one of those proud mother moments that I'll remember forever.

Outlooks: You are donating all the proceeds from *All Through The Night* to MassEquality. (MassEquality.org) Tell me about this organization and why you feel so strongly about supporting them?

SB: A few years ago, the highest court in Massachusetts declared that gay people should (and did!) have the right to marry. The brouhaha that followed was intense. But MassEquality worked hard to organize both the gay community and the huge number of straight allies in Massachusetts, and won every battle—preserving equal marriage rights!

I've supported MassEquality from the start. I attended candlelight vigils. I campaigned for equal rights candidates in local elections. I donated money and time, because I believe with all my heart that "liberty and justice for all" really does mean ALL.

See, I've got a son named Jason. He's an actor—he wants to sing and dance on Broadway. This kid can tap dance like you wouldn't believe. He's so talented, but you know what I'm most proud of? His kindness. He's unbelievably generous. He's warm and sweet and smart and funny. He's terrific. And he happens to be gay.

I don't want my son to be a second-class citizen. I want him to have the right to marry—should he be lucky enough to find that one person that he can't live without. I want to dance at my kid's wedding.

And how cool is it that I could write a book about the wedding of this character I adore—Jules—and use my earnings from it to help safeguard my son's right to marry? I think it's very cool. ▼

Ralph Higgins is a writer, columnist and author of several books, including *Hot Target* and *All Through The Night*.

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**COVERguy
winner Daniel
& Host
Mathieu**

Daniel Romolliwa is picture perfect after winning

COVERguy Season 3

By Rob Salerno

It's been only a year since Daniel Romolliwa left his home in Lethbridge, Alberta to pursue a modelling career in Toronto, but he's already made a splash in a big way by winning the third cycle of OutTV's COVERguy, landing him a lucrative contract with Ginch Gonch underwear and the cover of this very magazine.

But that isn't to say that Romolliwa hasn't been working hard to reach his recent successes. If the smile on his face looks a little wide, it's because the twenty-six-year-old fitness centre manager and competitive bodybuilder is finally seeing the payoff to years of training to get to the top of his game.

"Winning COVERguy felt like all the hard work, always having to stay in shape to be ready for body-building competitions, was finally justified from going to all the competitions and everything," Romolliwa says.

"It's fun. The best part about it is actually that you're having fun but you're still able to pay your bills with it as well," he says.

It turns out that competitive bodybuilding—aside from getting him in top physical shape—was also great practice for underwear modeling.

"In competitive body building you're wearing practically nothing on stage," Romolliwa says. "For me it's almost easier, because I'm not greased up and not hitting poses and having to flex my muscles as hard as possible."

Daniel's confidence on the runway was definitely picked up on by the judges who routinely cited it as his greatest asset.

"Daniel impressed all of us immediately," says COVERguy judge John Nightingale. "He has an abundance of both sex-appeal and positive energy. He could easily model for any underwear line and be a spokesperson as well."

And the judges agreed that Romolliwa has the versatility to pull off many different styles.

"His looks can be defined as both 'classically handsome' and 'ruggedly tough' which translates well to a wider audience," Nightingale says.

"Besides his obvious beauty, Daniel can communicate an array of feelings and identities—the boy next door, the tough guy, the shy and sensitive type, the ladykiller—and all of them seem authentic," says judge Nina Arsenault. "This ability to morph in front of the camera gives him incredible x-factor."

That x-factor has already grabbed the eye of photographers in Toronto, who were critical in getting Romolliwa into the competition.

"Two different photographers I met gave me the heads up about the competition and I agreed that even if I didn't win it would be great TV exposure," Romolliwa says. "But then I ended up winning and it's even better than I thought."

The exposure he's earned goes beyond the scorching hot ratings the show has earned on OutTV in Canada. COVERguy has become a hit on YouTube and is now syndicated in the US, Australia, and Israel, giving Romolliwa an international audience.

The latest cycle of COVERguy was gussied up with bigger prizes, higher production values, and celebrity guest appearances, all of which has paid off with higher interest in the show, says COVERguy producer Larry Peloso.

"The fact that we have Ginch Gonch, Goodlife Fitness Clubs and Redken as our sponsors this year really shows that there is a growing interest and commitment to the celebration of the male physique," he says. "I am really proud of the series—the production values are amazing, the talent is fantastic and I think our show has some of the sexiest men you could ever dream of seeing! Best of all—men and women both straight and gay love this show."

"We were really excited to have the Ginch Gonch boys, Ben and Ethan, part of the finale this season. It added a lot of glamour and got lots of people interested in coming to the taping to see the models live," says COVERguy host Mathieu Chantelois.

Working with all the models was a treat for Chantelois, who enjoyed helping the boys get ready for their weekly competitions.

"When we first rehearsed the underwear competitions, none of the guys knew how to wear their penis," Chantelois says. "We had to show them how to pack a bulge."

"Some of the guys had never seen a cock ring before," Chantelois laughs.

Even though Romolliwa is straight, he wasn't shy about strutting his stuff for gay audiences.

"I thought about that before I entered and I thought that if I did win, it would be a great way to set an example that being homophobic isn't necessary. It's the same as not liking a particular race. I was looking forward to the opportunity to set that example," he says. "One of my favourite messages to put forth is that people are just people, regardless of skin colour or sexual orientation."

With the modeling gigs finally starting to come in, Romolliwa's COVERguy victory has put him in a great position to spread that message to people everywhere.

COVERguy airs on OutTV Sundays at 8:30pm EST/5:30pm PST and Tuesdays at 11:30pm EST/8:30 PST. ▼

Photos by Brian Lawrence



Daniel on the runway

Exposure Festival

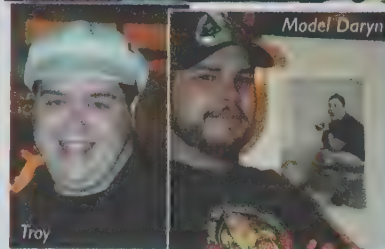
Jackson Photografix November 23



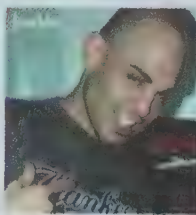
Model Scott



Nym, Adam, Ted, & Christi



Model Daryn

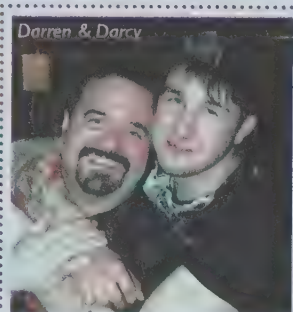


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Opening night November 22 at Stoli's



Darren & Darvy

DJ WestCoast Baby Daddy & Shiwana Millionaire

Loud & Queer Cabaret

November 23



Loud & Queer cast



Writers Gerald & Peni



Performers Neon & Twigg

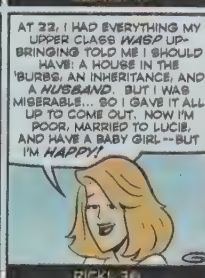
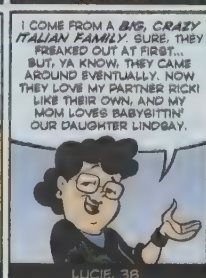
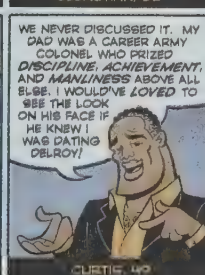
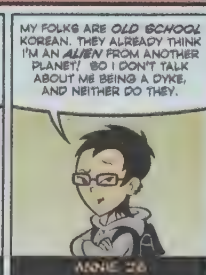
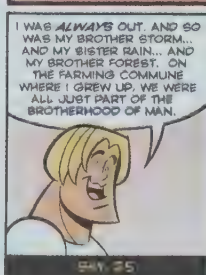
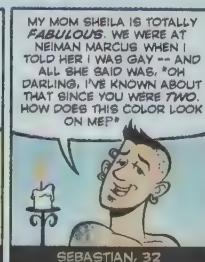
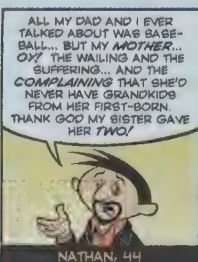


Susanna & Darin

Planning an event in Edmonton? Contact jackson@jacksonphotografix.com and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: jacksonphotografix.com

Mary Christmas at Boots

November 24 at Boots



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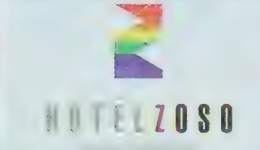


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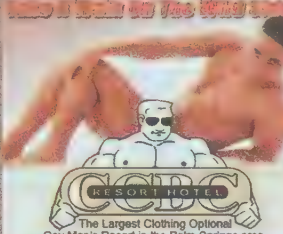
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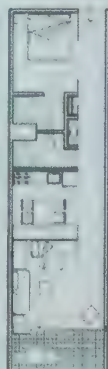
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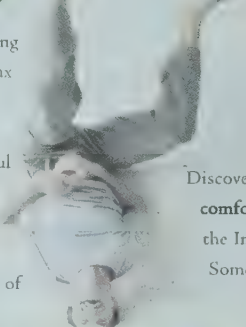
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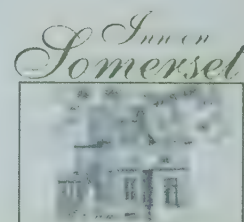
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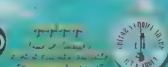
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OUTLOOKS' FEATURE HOTEL

Crowne Plaza Hotel Dallas Market Center

By Roy Heale

You might not consider Dallas as a gay vacation destination, but this southern metropolis landed right behind two-time, top-placed New York City on PlanetOut Travel Awards' best domestic destination this year. Dallas was named a runner up along with such well-known perennial contenders as Fort Lauderdale, San Francisco and West Hollywood.

This vibrant, lively city legitimately boasts the sixth largest gay population in the United States and once you spend a few days enjoying gay Dallas this claim is easy to understand. After all, there must be good reasons why openly gay pop singer George Michael now makes Dallas his home.

If you're planning a trip to Dallas, then the recently renovated Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dallas Market Center is a great place to stay. It is reasonably priced, has large, comfortable rooms and is located just a few minutes from downtown and the gay nightlife—a great place for a gay get-away.

This is especially true with the Crown Plaza Sleep Advantage, which guarantees you comfortable new beds, quiet zone floors, a sleep CD and relaxation tips, and a guaranteed wake-up call. They also offer an enhanced bath experience including Speakman massage showerheads, curved rods for a roomier shower, new Lightview white waffle weave shower curtains and thicker more absorbent towels, plus Re-Neu Botanicals bath amenities. A good night's sleep and a relaxing shower in the morning are what every gay traveller seeks. The Crowne Plaza satisfies that demand.

The 354 guest rooms also include cable TV, Starz movie channel, on-demand

movies, individual heating and air conditioning controls, high-speed internet access, phones with a data port, in-room safe and complimentary daily newspaper delivery to your room. There is also a fully equipped Business center for those who need to keep in touch with their office while travelling.

The Bristol Bar and Grill are located in the lobby for your dining and entertainment pleasure, and a fully equipped exercise room plus beautiful indoor swimming pool for some great relaxation and exercise. You can enjoy the spa and sauna after a workout.

There are three different room designs to choose from: Executive Parlor, Double Room and Executive King Room, each with a spacious layout and plenty of room to relax during your stay or entertain friends. Each spacious room is handsomely decorated in traditional colours, furnished with custom-quality tables, chairs and beds accompanied by numerous upscale amenities.

This delightful hotel is waiting to offer you a gay-friendly welcome and make your stay in Dallas a truly memorable experience as you enjoy the gaybourhood for which Dallas is becoming renowned in the GLBT community.

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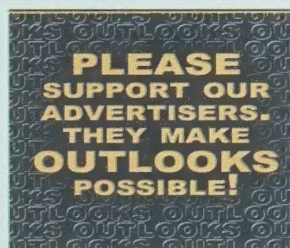
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The holiday season will get into the swing of things this December as expansive Jupiter conjuncts volcanic Pluto. Prepare for an avalanche of cheerful fun that could bury you up to your neck. Ho ... ho... ho... oops!



ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

If your hooves are itching for a little end-of-year escape, plan it now as Jupiter rubs Pluto. Proud Rams will manage to roam the plains in search of a relaxing respite from the crowds. The most important thing is to see what you can do to relieve stress and joyfully welcome in the holiday season. There are various means of stress reduction at your disposal. Ahem.



TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Queer Bulls will manage to hang their holiday balls all over town as Jupiter conjuncts Pluto. You'll be very attractive to the general hoi polloi (which can have its advantages). Life will become one long party with a full open bar and elfin minions ready to attend to your every wish. How about wishing for something to lessen the throbbing in your head the morning after?



GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Haul out the boxes of assorted holiday stuff and begin to decorate, toss and wrap. December will ring in a time of deeper connection to those who are close to you. As you roast your chestnuts on an open fire, think about what you want and do not want in a relationship. Jupiter will conjunct Pluto and inflame your passion ... or something like that. Just watch out for the sparks!



CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

You may think that this is no time of year to burn the midnight oil at work (unless its because it is the holiday party season). But as Jupiter hits Pluto, your workplace will become a tinderbox of activity. Kaboom, gay Crab! Finish up old projects and clean off your desk before the New Year bell rings. Before you know it, you will be off onto new things, new folks and new experiences.



LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

There'll be no stopping proud Lions this December. Jupiter will conjunct Pluto and create a festive frolic that is destined to get you into mucho trouble. Good—you have been too sedate and hum drum lately! Unleash your inner party beast and find new ways to be the creative genius you were meant to become. How beastly will you behave? Let's just say true to form. Grrr.



VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Queer Virgins will manage to create a holiday atmosphere all through the house. 'Tis the season to create opportunities to entertain family, friends and friends-to-be. Jupiter conjuncts Pluto, which can create a domestic frenzy. Don't try to take on too much—just handle what you can easy control. Then deck the halls with hunks of... well, how about hunks?



LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

When there is something witty and engaging to be said, you will find a way to say it this December. Proud Libras will be especially eloquent, compelling and delightful as Jupiter conjuncts Pluto through the month. Charm every scrooge and make very merry. There may even be an extra lump or two in your stocking at the evenings end. Err coal...?



SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Your end of year bonus is in the works as Pluto conjuncts Jupiter. Not only will gay Scorps realize and end of year financial surge, they will be able to capitalize on it with careful fiscal acumen. What are you waiting for? Begin your research and start investing in the future. Before you know it you will become well endowed. We can only hope!



SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Gay Archers will be bon vivants this December. They virtually sparkle with personality and become a social force. Not a moment too soon! Jupiter conjuncts Pluto and lends a certain urgency and zest to every one of your meetings and greetings. Start new projects, meet new folks. The most important thing is to get out of your old skin and slip into someone else's.



CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

December will bring all pink Caps to new levels of consciousness. At least that is what Pluto and Jupiter say. In fact it is a great time to expand your vision of the future and create a generous legacy to your many great personal works. Get involved in your favorite community efforts or with a certain worthy charitable cause. If not you then who? If not now, then when?



AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Friends will be ready to make merry. Are you? Aqueerians know how to gather the troops and now, as Jupiter pushes Pluto, the troops will be on the march. How can you best get into the social swim this December when everything and everyone wants your attention at the same time? The secret is to not take on too much and then peter out. However, Peter being out is very good.



PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Professional projects will seem to take on a life of their own this December. Guppies with ambition can make their big move. Even those who would prefer to take the holiday season off will find ample opportunities to climb another rung on the corporate ladder. Jupiter conjuncts Pluto and pushes you into the shark tank. Will you become shark bait or shark hunter?

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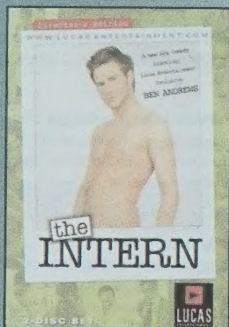
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The Intern
From: Lucas Entertainment



Featuring: Ben Andrews, Jonathan Vargas, Ray Star, Zach Randall, Derrick Hanson, Jason Ridge, Michael Lucas, Christian Cruz, Jimmy, Matt Cole

Running Time: 115 minutes

Trojan Pictures of New York is looking for an intern and Ben Andrews sees the advertisement in a local gay newspaper and decides to apply for the job. When he arrives at their office he is mistakenly mixed in with a group of aspiring young models hoping to become the next big porn star. Poor Ben appears to be the nerd amongst the beautiful people and during the auditions he explains that he came for the intern position. Luckily he gets the job and has no idea how his life is about to change.

Alexander—Michael Lucas—is the boss and his cute Latino assistant, Christian Cruz, is giving him botox injections while Alexander is ranting on the telephone. A frustrated Alexander explains that sales are falling and they must find a really big cock for their next production. He explains that big cocks mean big sales and Christian has to find someone very quickly.

Meanwhile Ben is learning that his most important task is to get coffee for Alexander and make sure it is the perfect cup of coffee or he's in big trouble. Worse still, Alexander constantly needs more coffee. When Ben delivers the perfect cup to Alexander while he is directing a scene with Jason Ridge and the stunningly well-hung Jonathon Vargas, it dawns on Ben that his new job has some unusual perks. He cannot take his eyes off the hot action but everyone

else on the movie set cannot take their eyes off the huge bulge in Ben's pants.

Christian notices Ben's massive protrusion and realises he may have found the new star that Alexander is searching for—but how to find out for sure is the challenge.

It doesn't take long before the devious Christian spills a cup of coffee in Ben's lap while he is working at his computer. The two rush to the washroom to clean up the mess and Christian soon finds out what's inside Ben's pants. The rest—as they say—is history. Ben is no longer the nerdy intern fetching coffee as he becomes the new star with the foot long schlong.

This is a light-hearted, comedic look at the gay adult movie industry with high production values and some great actors. This DVD also comes with extra scenes, out-takes, model interviews and more, just to add a few extra surprises for the viewer.

RATING:

(OUT OF FIVE STARS)

MUSIC: ★★★★★
BODIES: ★★★★★
ACTION: ★★★★★
SETS: ★★★★★
STORY: ★★★★★

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Backback Skate Mates
From: Eurocreme -SK8 M8s



Featuring: Max Fonda, Chris Reed, Peter Till, Lucky Taylor, Thomas Dyk, Dave Martin, Ashley Rahit, Mao Cruise, Bryan Collins.

Running Time: 95 minutes

This is the debut movie from Sk8 M8s studio and it is already receiving rave reviews. The collection of young Czech models includes some familiar faces and some brand new discoveries all of whom are young, hung and ready for action on or off their skateboards.

In the first scene entitled Virginity Lost a young eighteen-year-old skater boy constantly fantasies about his dream boy. Shortly after his eighteenth birthday he is alone in his bedroom and the viewer is treated to one of his fantasies coming to life. In a dream world he finally gets the man of his desires. These two young men forget about their skateboards and enjoy wild sex together in the outdoors on a hot sunny afternoon. Even if it's only a dream it satisfies his lust for a short time.

The second scene is entitled The Breakers Yard and two young friends seem to know how to have fun with a skateboard and a shopping cart. They end up at a deserted breaker's scrap yard and know how to take full advantage of their

surroundings. An old wooden desk is the perfect place for a sexual escapade and these two hung studs waste no time getting down to hardcore sex. Their imaginations manage to find a new position for each new prop they find in the scrap yard.

In a scene entitled Hitch-Hiking two young skaters head out of the city for fun in the country and in the final scene, The Thief, the viewer is treated to a very hot threesome.

This new entry into the Eurocreme family appears to be this fall's best newcomer to the gay adult movie scene.

RATING:

(OUT OF FIVE STARS)

MUSIC: ★★★★★
BODIES: ★★★★★
ACTION: ★★★★★
SETS: ★★★★★
STORY: ★★★★★

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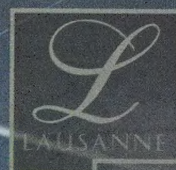
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